

Kyodan

News Letter

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN

JAPAN CHRISTIAN CENTER

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Light in Darkness

All is quiet in front of the low white building, whose distinctive skylights reach up, fingerlike, to usher in the light. Then the bus comes back from school, and thirty children emerge and make their way toward the pink wall with the dancing elephant that marks the entrance to Kohitsuji Gakuen.

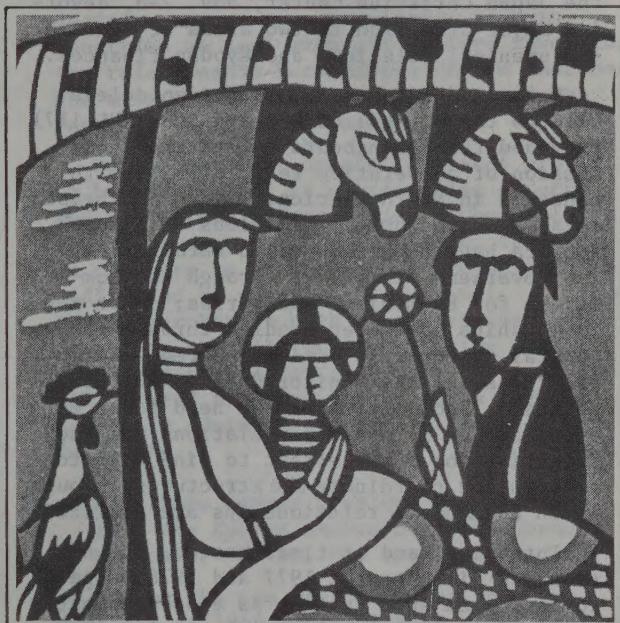
Watching the children, Director YAMASHITA Katsuhiro notes the changes since they entered the home a year and half ago. Expressionless faces now register recognition and emotion. A child who had never spoken returns a greeting. A boy who always stood up to eat sits at the table with other children. Simple patterns of daily living slowly take shape.

Kohitsuji Gakuen is one of three homes for handicapped persons built in Fukushima Prefecture since 1972 as part of the ministry of the Ohmori Megumi Church of Tokyo. The first, Shirakawa Megumi Gakuen, opened in April, 1972, as a home where thirty moderately handicapped children live while getting special education and training. Kohitsuji Gakuen, for severely handicapped children, followed in April, 1975, on land adjoining Shirakawa Megumi Gakuen. This April, Adatara Ikuseien began providing vocational and social training for handicapped adults.

To trace the origin of this concern, Yamashita goes back to 1960 and the anti-U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty movement, in which many young people who had come up through the church's kindergarten and church school began to rethink their lives. "How far are we willing to go in following Christ?" they asked.

In 1962, more to test their faith than from altruistic motives, they participated in a camp for mentally and physically handicapped children. The behavior of the children, who acted almost like animals due to isolation and neglect, shocked them. They went back to the camp in succeeding summers but could not escape the nagging question, "Is it enough for me to love my neighbor just when it is convenient for me?"

Asking "How should we, the prodigal sons, respond to the birth of Christ?" in his Advent sermon in 1968, Ohmori Megumi Associ-



Nativity (1976)

Sadao WATANABE

ate Pastor Yamashita announced that several of the young laity and the Yamashitas were moving to Shirakawa, 120 miles from Tokyo, to start a home for handicapped children. He invited others to participate in whatever way they could.

The following April, with the church organized to undergird its efforts, the first contingent moved to Shirakawa to begin raising funds, draw up building plans and arrange for help available from prefectural and national government offices toward building and operating expenses. Three years later the first of the three homes opened. Now, the possibility of setting up small businesses in several areas to employ handicapped persons is being explored with local church and community leaders.

On Dec. 4 of this year the Ohmori Megumi Church celebrated its 50th anniversary. Under its first pastor, now pastor emeritus, the Rev. IWAMURA Seishiro, the church established a strong base through its kindergarten and church school. On this foundation, under the pastorate of his son, the Rev. IWAMURA Shinji, it has developed marriage and family counselling services. It sponsors pipe organ concerts for the community and started a new preaching point last year.

The life of the church expands, observes Yamashita, as the laity seek to follow Christ and share the light of His love.

(Helen Post)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HOLDS THIRD MEETING

The Kyodan Executive Committee for the current biennium held its third meeting at the Japan Christian Center, Nov. 7-8, devoting major attention to two areas of concern: --ecumenical relations and Kyodan finances.

Recommendations of the Kyodan delegation to the Council of Cooperation (KNL 117) provided the springboard for extended discussion of cooperative relationships with churches in North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. Relations with North America have been channelled through the CoC; overseas ministries through the Committee for Ecumenical Ministries; other relationships have been handled through the General Secretary's office. German church relationships are monitored by an NCCJ committee.* Recognition of the need for a more even balance in overseas relations was the incentive for a new effort to find ways to broaden and coordinate the structures through which ecumenical relationships are realized.

Intensive, and at times heated, attention was given to the 1977 and 1978 budgets, focussing on such matters as apportionment receipts, salary levels, ministers' pensions, and campaigns for special program funds. It was decided that ¥6 million a year would be raised for the next six years to help meet church building needs in Okinawa District, and to appropriate over ¥4 million in 1978 to resume free distribution of the biweekly Kyodan Times (Shimpo) to all member churches.

It was also decided that a formal expression of regret over the closure of its Christian Studies Department would be sent to Aoyama Gakuin. Of special concern is the fact that, as a result of this closure, there is now no Kyodan related facility preparing men to be Directors of Christian Education. The course at Seiwa Women's College, Hyogo Prefecture, is limited to women. The Committee on Education will add this problem to its continuing discussion of the DCE role in the church, a role now receiving increasing recognition in local churches.

Notable among the activities reported by the Districts was a novel theological education program conducted by Hyogo District. A series of lectures, originally planned for seminary drop-outs in connection with Expo '70 protests, proved to be so popular that 60 ministers and lay persons attended the ten sessions held this autumn. A second series of lectures, covering a wide range of seminary subjects, will be sponsored by the District next spring.

The Moderator announced that General Secretary TAKAI Kiyoshi will extend his term of service to Dec. 31, 1977. His successor, (John) NAKAJIMA Masaaki, is being asked to take over as soon as possible in the new year. If a hiatus occurs, the Sanyaku (Moderator, Vice-Moderator, and Secretary) will take responsibility for the interim period. (*see below)

KNL Interviews Paul Schneiss on German Church Relationships

The Kyodan is now making an effort to be more responsible in ecumenical mission. Recently Moderator TODA visited Germany and attended the EMS Synod Assembly. In that connection, seeking clarification of Kyodan-German Church relationships, KNL asked Paul SCHNEISS, Kyodan Executive Secretary from Germany, to respond to some frequently voiced questions. (Eds.)

-- First, regarding EMS, what is the history and nature of the present relationship?

The relationship between the Kyodan and the German churches is as old as the Kyodan itself. The congregations founded by the Swiss-German mission society (Ostasien Mission), in Japan since 1885, were included in the formation of the Kyodan and remained there after WW II. After the war several German mission societies started work in Japan, most of them forming their own churches. The Ostasien Mission continued to work, mainly among students, more or less in cooperation with the Kyodan.

Since the early 60s (New Delhi 1961) extensive discussion, strongly influenced by

the overseas experience of the mission societies, took place among the German churches with the result that several societies were integrated into regional mission centers, founded by one or several churches in West Germany, to take over, partly or fully, the old responsibilities and calling of the societies. The first official consultation between the German and Japanese churches took place during these years of change, in October 1965.

Two of those mission centers in West Germany entered into German-Japanese relations on behalf of the whole Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD). They are the Associa-

-- continued on page 3 --

On German Church Relationships (cont'd)

tion of Churches and Missions in South-western Germany (EMS) and the Division for World Mission in West Berlin (BMW). Rev. TODA attended the Synod of the EMS in October, the second Kyodan representative to visit an EMS Synod. Professor SATAKE attended the founding Synod in 1972 with NCCJ General Secretary NAKAJIMA.

EMS is the association of six churches and four former mission societies. The Synod of about 80 delegates meets at least once a year for discussion and decision on policy and finances. The Council (about 20) makes interim decisions, and the executive secretariat (9) meets weekly. In addition to the Japanese churches EMS has relations with churches in Korea, Indonesia, India, Lebanon, Syria, Tanzania, South Africa, Cameroon, and Ghana. EMS represents over eight million Protestants.

The most important occurrence during these years of Kyodan-EMS relationship is the actualization of an exchange of personnel. Rev. MURAKAMI Hiroshi was sent to serve as a secretary on the EMS staff in Stuttgart in 1974, and I was received as a member of the Kyodan staff in Tokyo. Both sides are hoping that such exchanges will serve to strengthen the interchurch relationship.

-- *What other German Church relationships does the Kyodan have? How did they start?*

The Berlin Mission Center was founded by the Church in Berlin-Brandenburg when four mission societies were integrated in 1974. The BMW represents about 1.5 million church members in the small area surrounded by the famous wall. The BMW has relationships with churches in Japan; and also in Korea, India, South Africa, and Israel. The BMW and the EMS cooperate in their relationship with the Kyodan to the extent that they can be considered as one.

Another relationship is that between the Kyodan and the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU). This is a union of three state churches; Berlin-Brandenburg, Westfalen, and Rheinland. Dr. Beckman, then president of the Rhenish Church, visited Japan in 1963, but even before that, in 1960, Rev. OMURA, then Vice-Moderator, visited the EKU in Berlin. The Kyodan-EKU relationship developed until it was agreed, in 1963, that two Kyodan pastors a year may study at German theological faculties under EKU sponsorship. Rev. SUZUKI Masahisa was the first to take advantage of this arrangement.

-- *How are these interchurch relationships actually managed? What are the cooperative structures?*

The foundations of the present relations between the German churches and the Kyodan were laid at two official consultations, sponsored by the EKD and the NCCJ, in 1965 and 1976. The main step in 1965 was the decision to create a commission in both countries to deal with all matters involving the relationship between the German churches and mission societies or agencies and the Japanese churches and agencies.

During the next decade this step proved to be very useful in coordinating efforts and furthering understanding. When both sides met again at Oiso, in 1976, they met as partners in an established relationship unaffected by changes in personnel. All related churches in both countries are represented in the bilateral commission which considers the needs, problems and tasks of all related groups. The Kyodan's participation is administered by its General Secretary.

-- *Are there common problems and concerns that the Kyodan shares with the German churches? If so, how are they handled?*

During the ten years between the Oiso meetings of 1965 and 1976 both sides realized that there cannot be any kind of relationship between the Japanese and German churches apart from their joint responsibility toward the wider Asian region, from Korea to Indonesia. This means that bilateral Japanese-German relations can only be realized by taking into account, at each stage, how their respective decisions or common actions affect the Asian region.

It was also agreed that it is necessary to further mutual understanding in this wider context by the exchange of personnel and information. The flow of money from the German churches to Japan was never very important for either side, and both sides today agree that big money is not a necessary part of an effective relationship between churches.

-- *Finally, what about the Protestant churches in East Germany?*

The churches in the two parts of Germany no longer have organizational relations. The spiritual fellowship continues, to be sure, even amidst tensions; but the churches in West Germany cannot speak for the churches in East Germany, and vice versa. That is why the churches in East Germany and the Japanese churches agreed in 1976 to have a separate relationship. The first official delegation from Japan will visit East Germany early next year and the Kyodan hopes that this fellowship will also develop into a fruitful exchange of information and personnel.

State and Church Symposium Held

A symposium on "State and Church" was held at the Christian Center in Tokyo, Nov. 16-17, sponsored jointly by the Kyodan's Committee on Social Concerns and Special Committees on the Yasukuni Shrine Issue, Buraku Discrimination Issue and Japan-Korea Solidarity. Rather than seeking theoretical definitions of "state," or "gospel," it concentrated on providing encouragement to Christians in their struggle against discrimination, and for human rights, in the face of the increasing encroachment of state power.

In Korea this is illustrated by the Park Government's oppression of Christians and others struggling for restoration of basic democratic freedoms. In Japan the trend is seen in the recent Supreme Court Decision upholding the right to use public funds for Shinto ground-breaking ceremonies for a public building in the city of Tsu.*

Ambivalent Nature of the State

Most symposium participants saw the state as an ambivalent and, at times, fearful presence. There was testimony from those in rural areas that now, as before World War II, failure to participate in local shrine festival ceremonies can mean a farmer's water is cut off (mura hachibu). Participation in Anti-Yasukuni Bill activities by a pastor, even in towns, tends to cut the church off from the local community. Members tend to warn an issues-involved pastor that his church will not "grow." Involvement in human rights issues can even put his livelihood in jeopardy.

One pastor warned that unless Christians have a clearer understanding of both the gospel and the nature of the state, the church will repeat its mistakes of the past by giving in to pressure and adopting an evangelistic strategy which identifies the gospel with the self-interests of both the organizational church and the state.

Evangelism and State Power

Two occasions when the Japanese church used evangelism to serve national and church egoism were pre-Warld War II Japan Congregational Church evangelism in Korea and the Christian Pavilion at Expo '70. In the first instance Korean Christians were urged to follow the Japanese policy of forced Shrine worship. In the second, by participation in Expo '70, Christians in effect put the stamp of approval on the high economic growth policy of the Japanese government involving Japanese economic aggression at the expense of other people in other countries.

The question was asked "Why was the Japanese church, which at the beginning of the Meiji era had a posture of responsible criticism of the government, later swept up into supporting the nationalism and militarism of absolutist state power?" One answer was that the "pure gospel" movements and "church-state separation" were used to help make the church a tool of state power, and that the same process is now being repeated within both church and state.

Economics and Human Rights

As Japan becomes stronger economically the Japanese church has more problems in common with the church in the West in regard to witnessing in the field of international relations. There is greater need for common witness and action. The combination of Japanese economic and American military power in South Korea is a case in point. A movie on Buraku liberation, shown at the symposium, emphasized the importance of immediate ratification of the U.N. human rights covenants in order to improve the status of buraku people and Koreans in Japan, and gain broader understanding and guarantees of human rights.

We were reminded that the Japanese church's awakening to the need for solidarity with Koreans in Japan and with buraku people has only begun. The anti-discrimination sub-committee is preparing pamphlets on the Sayama (Ishikawa) case. It also plans to work for revision of the honsenki (registration of family origin) system, while calling for reforms of the Japanese language itself, which still reflects the status of women in the Tokugawa period.

Women's Rights

A woman delegate insisted on the need for a sub-committee within the Social Concerns Committee to focus the attention of the church on discrimination against women. It was noted that the committee reports contained no reference to this problem precisely because of blindness in the church to the "little-emperor system" which still exists in many homes and the inequality which exists in the church. The Committee's closing report signalled future intentions to focus on discrimination and the crucial need to secure human rights, in the church as well as in society.

(Walter BALDWIN)

"Nativity" (p.1) is taken from No. 83 of Roba-no-Mimi, Collection of Mr. WATANABE's Katazome Hanga, edited by SUZUKI Haruhisa. Watanabe, a well-known Christian artist, has adapted the traditional folk-art of katazome, of cut-stencil technique for dyeing textiles, to his unique method of making prints on Japanese paper.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR KYODAN PASTORS

The Commission on the Ministry, meeting Nov. 28-29, reviewed the findings of its survey of continuing education needs of pastors and of resources available to meet those needs. The findings are based on replies from 150 pastors, a representative 10% sample of the ordained ministers serving Kyodan churches, and from 33 institutions and organizations involved in providing continuing education opportunities.

Survey results attest to the centrality of preaching and evangelism for the church in Japan. Asked to indicate three top needs for future growth from a list of nine, 90% of the pastors picked as a preacher. This priority need was followed by:

as an evangelist 48%
as a person 39%
as a counselor 27%
as a community leader... 27%

High priority in regard to continuing education content was given to:

Bible study 71.5%
personal faith 51%
pastoral studies 38%
theology 32%
interpersonal relations 30%

Specialized forms of ministry were checked less frequently.

The continuing education method most preferred by the pastors is the seminar (kenshukai) .. 70.8%. Among different types of seminars the most popular were seminars for pastors only, but there was also considerable desire for seminars for couples, families, with lay persons, and with

non-Christians. Less popular study methods included

books	33.7%
observation trips	32%
seminary refresher courses	32%
graduate study	29%
local peer study groups	28%
clinical training	24%
professional journals.	14%
human relations laboratories	4.6%
correspondence courses.	4%
cassette tapes	4%

So far as assistance is concerned, 37.5% desire scholarship aid, 31% desire information about resources available, 31% desire special continuing education programs, and 25% would like career development counseling.

The attempt to gather information about resources now available or being developed in Japan secured replies from 10 seminaries, 6 hospitals, 3 schools, 2 social welfare institutions, 8 study centers, and 4 Kyodan districts. Institutions in Eastern Japan are most concerned to help pastors develop:

as preachers	55%
as evangelists	55%
as persons	35%
as worship leaders ..	30%

In Western Japan institutions give priority to

evangelism	62%
preaching	54%
community leadership.	46%
personal growth	38%
leadership in worship.	31%
counseling	31%

Continuing education resources offered by these

institutions focus primarily on Bible study, theology, and pastoral studies, corresponding closely with the priorities expressed by pastors, but whereas the pastors most emphasized the group study method, institutional offerings favor individual study facilities such as libraries and professional publications over seminar type programs.

The Commission on the Ministry plans to share the results of this survey with all Kyodan pastors and appropriate institutions. In June 1978 a consultation is to be held with representatives from the Ministry Committees of the various districts to explore together the next steps in improving and increasing continuing education offerings and expanding their use.

Applications are now being received for the 7th Joint Pastoral Studies Seminar in Kyoto, Jan. 27-Feb. 3, which will feature an overnight stay at Tenri, near Nara, to encounter the Tenri religion at first hand.

In early March an orientation session is being planned for about 40 ministerial candidates who will be taking the ordination examination later that month. Such sessions have not been possible since polarization over Expo '70 and related issues began.

Another positive step of the Commission is to initiate a continuing education consulting service for Kyodan pastors.

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RARE WOODARD COLUMN COLLATED KNL has collated into one volume an almost complete set of the weekly Japan Times columns on religious activities in Japan written by William P. Woodard (1896-1973) dating from 1962 to 1966 Dr. Woodard was a well-known missionary who served in Japan before the war, and then returned with the Occupation as interpreter and member of the Religious Research Unit of SCAP. He was the first Research Director of the International Institute for the Study of Religions from 1956 to 1966. Anyone interested in receiving a set at cost should contact KNL.

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Women of UPC and Kyodan Share Asian Encounter

To carry out resolutions made at their 1976 Triennial Meeting, the United Presbyterian Church women planned a tour called "Asian Encounter" which included a consultation with church women of Japan on the theme "Human Rights--Role of Women." The National Federation of Kyodan Women's societies undertook local responsibility for this consultation.

The UPC women arrived at Haneda late Nov. 2 and were transported directly to Tozanso, Gotemba, for four days of orientation conducted by the UPC women themselves. Speakers, provided by the Kyodan women, were Dr. Carl FURUYA, of International Christian University, on Asia and Japan; Rev. CHANG, a Taiwanese minister from Kobe, on Taiwan; Mr. T. ONO, Asahi newspaper reporter, on the Philippines; and Dr. L.L. CHO, guest lecturer at Sophia University, on Korea. Bible studies were led by Dr. Aurelia FULLER, tour leader. There was attendance at the Kyodan church in Gotemba and a bus tour of the Lake Hakone area.

On Nov. 8, the 66 women divided into four groups of which three left for consultations in Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Sixteen stayed in Japan for a Tokyo Consultation beginning Nov. 9.

For the Japan Section the main lecturer was Dr. Kiyoko CHO, of ICU, who spoke on

the past and present role of Christianity in the Japanese cultural context. In three Bible study sessions, attempts were made to think together from a Biblical point of view about human rights and the role of Christian women. Rev. Mrs. MORI Kazuko spoke on "The Cross and God's Kingdom" (Luke 18:31-34), Rev. Mrs. SUNOHARA Suzuko spoke on "A World Freed by Forgiveness" (Luke 7:36-50), and Rev. Mrs. HANABUSA Mitsue spoke on "How the Bible Looks at Women" (I Cor. 11:1-16).

A time was set aside to talk about such current issues as problems of the aged, women ministers, public education, minority problems, and Japan-Korea relations. The consultation ended with an inspiring communion service on Nov. 12. Japanese women arranged for an open house in a Japanese home, Kabuki theater, shopping, a visit to Tokyo Women's Christian University, and attendance at four Kyodan churches followed by lunch with church members.

Most significant was the direct personal encounter. The Japanese women appreciated the fact that the U.S. women had come all the way to meet them. It was realized anew that though we often express it differently we are all motivated by the same faith in Christ and we all need forgiveness and redemption through Him.

(Ruby KORVER)

Keiwa Gakuen Celebrates its Tenth Anniversary

On Nov. 3, Culture Day in Japan, the sun broke through the usually cloudy sky to brighten Keiwa Gakuen High School's celebration of the 10th anniversary of its founding. A special cause for rejoicing was the participation of Principal OTA Toshio, who is recovering from a heart attack suffered in July. The gymnasium was filled for the formal ceremony, music program, and box-luncheon fellowship hour. Trustee Chairperson MUTO Tomio presented awards to staff and faculty members who had served ten years.

Keiwa Gakuen is unique in that it is the only high

school established under the aegis of The United Church of Christ in Japan. It is also the only Protestant high school on the Japan Sea coast of Northern Honshu Island.

Built right on the sea-shore 15 kilometers northeast of Niigata, on land donated by the city, Keiwa Gakuen represents a capital investment of nearly ¥189 million of which 58% was raised in Japan. Approximately 23% was donated by North American churches, and 19% came from churches in Germany.

Keeping the class size down to 40, for an exception-

ally high teacher-student ratio, has been important for maintaining quality education and a warm Christian atmosphere. Among its 910 graduates 47% have gone on to colleges and universities in Japan, 1.6% have entered colleges overseas, and 23.3% have entered a junior college or some specialized school. Even in its first decade Keiwa has already substantially reinforced the Christian presence in northern Honshu. The Kyodan is especially appreciative of the key roles filled by Rev. and Mrs. John Moss, missionaries from North America.